


DATE: February 6, 2023

TO: Skagway Traditional Council

FR: Judean Gordon 
SEARHC Board Representative

RE: SEARHC Board of Directors Quarterly Meeting

The SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) Board of Directors met for their quarterly board and committee meetings on January 25–27, 2023. The meetings were conducted at the executive offices in Juneau.

Accreditation Governing Body Committee – January 25, 2023

SEARHC Chief of Staff, J. Kennon Kirk, M.D., provided an overview of the credentials list that included updates and changes to the SEARHC provider network. Senior Vice President/Chief Medical Officer Elliot Bruhl, M.D., presented the medical operations update for the first quarter of fiscal year 2023. Highlights covered efforts toward Behavioral Health services, Rehabilitation services, Specialty Care services at Ethel Lund Medical Center; and Primary Care access across the network.

- Approved 12 new appointments, 27 reappointments, three changes in staff categories, three changes in privileges, and eight administrative closures and resignations. A Limited Butterfly Point-of-Care Ultrasound (POCUS) Privilege Form for the new handheld portable ultrasound device was also approved.
- Behavioral Health continued to be a major focus with tremendous efforts to further expand facilities and opportunities for opioid treatment services across the region. Juneau's Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) has seen tremendous growth and success since opening in February 2022.
- The new OTP Sitka-based clinic opened on January 30, 2023. Facility design and planning is in process to extend this program in the community of Klawock.
- Opportunities for expanding the Intensive Substance Abuse Treatment Program in Sitka are currently being evaluated. This program provides intense daily residential and nonresidential treatment for adults dealing with substance abuse. Enrollment can be scheduled at 907.966.8611 or through your local clinic.
- In the first quarter of FY23, there was a rapid increase in positive influenza cases. The quality data showed high volumes for the last four seasons.

Executive Committee – January 25, 2023

The Executive Committee heard from President/CEO Charles Clement and discussed draft Resolution No. 2023-01. The committee voted to recommend draft Resolution No. 2023-01 to the full board for consideration on Friday, January 27. Chairwoman, Kimberley Strong informed the committee of the February board work session agenda included in the board packet.

Finance Committee – January 26, 2023

Members of the Finance Committee met on Thursday, January 26, with SEARHC's auditing firm, Elgee Rehfeld, LLC. The auditors reviewed the FY22 audit and informed the committee that there were zero findings. Senior Executive Vice President/Chief Financial Officer Dan Harris reported financial results from the first quarter of the fiscal year.

- Continued growth in overall volumes has generated increased revenue and the need for additional staffing. SEARHC continues to succeed in growing existing volumes and looking at implementing new programs.
- SEARHC's growth over the past few years are the result of continuous planning and investments in serving the people of Southeast Alaska. This continues to be a driving force producing solid financial performance.

Patient Experience Committee – January 26, 2023

Members of the Patient Experience Committee met on Thursday, January 26. They heard reports from Senior Vice President/Chief Operating Officer Leatha Merculieff on patient satisfaction results from the first quarter, report out on the Healthy Is Here (HIH) grant, and a presentation on call center operations.

- SEARHC's newly formed call center operations update was presented to the committee. Implementation of the program was launched in January 2022 to schedule appointments, assist with patient registration, help patients with MyHealth portal access, and other general information.
- The HIH grant allows tribes to fund local initiatives unique to their communities. Since 2017, \$1.9 million in HIH grant funds have been disbursed to tribal partners.

Board of Directors – January 27, 2023

The Board of Directors met on Friday, January 27, to conduct regular business. Highlights of this meeting include:

- The Don Young Alaska Native Health Care Land Transfers Act of 2022, which was signed into law in December 2022, directs the conveyance of specific parcels of Indian Health Service (IHS) lands to expand social and healthcare services in Alaska. This act allows for the transfer of federal IHS land for MEMC to SEARHC ownership.
- Also passed was the "Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023" including nearly \$7 billion for IHS in fiscal year 2023. The omnibus spending package includes a historic provision providing IHS with advance appropriations for the first time and will provide critically needed planning and budgeting stability, as well as insulate tribal health programs from the adverse effects caused by delays in the annual appropriations process.
- SEARHC Chairwoman Kimberley Strong and Senior Vice President/Chief Operating Officer Leatha Merculieff will be traveling to Washington, D.C. to attend the IHS FY25 Tribal Budget Formulation with focus on funding for the Mt. Edgecumbe Medical Center (MEMC) IHS Joint Venture.

- With the opening of Juneau’s Physical Rehabilitation Clinic, remodeling at the Ethel Lund Medical Center is adding exam and clinic space to increase access to specialty care services.
- SEARHC has entered into a purchase agreement with Juneau OB/Gyn. Integration of this practice into the SEARHC network is expected to be complete by late-April. Juneau OB/Gyn is the only practice in Juneau that offers comprehensive women's health services by board certified obstetrician and gynecologists. Providing a full spectrum obstetric and gynecologic services, including high and low risk prenatal care, annual well woman care, pap smears, infection screening, genetic counseling, treatment of complex pelvic floor problems, and advanced minimally invasive pelvic and reconstructive surgery.
- Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) Representative, Kimberley Strong reported on activities at the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) campus. Patient Housing managed many changes to accommodate the increased number of guests inside Patient Housing lobby areas and the café. Based on patient feedback, ANTHC retained an outside company to conduct operational assessments and improvements at the Patient Housing facility with the intent to improve patient/guest access focused on efficiency improvement. Staffing continues to remain a large challenge for ANMC.
- Resolution 2023-01 Authorization to Acquire Juneau Youth Services, Inc. was presented and approved.
- Senior Executive Vice President/Chief Financial Officer Dan Harris provided highlights from the Chief Financial Officer Report. Auditing firm, Elgee Rehfeld, LLC., presented an overview of the FY2022 financial audit results with zero findings.

Key Accomplishments from the meetings

- Approval of the Consortium-wide Medical Staff Credential List
- Approval of a Medical Staff Limited Butterfly Point-of-Care Ultrasound Privilege Form
- Approval of FY2022 Financial Audit
- Approval of Chief Financial Officer Report
- Adoption of Resolution 2023-01 Authorization to Acquire Juneau Youth Services, Inc.

I appreciate the opportunity to represent our community on the SEARHC Board of Directors and invite you to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. Again, thanks for your continued support of SEARHC’s important mission: *Alaska Native People working in partnership to provide the best healthcare for our communities.*